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**STORY OF
LINCOLN**



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The Story *of* Lincoln



by

Virginia Heath

Author of

“LITTLE STORIES OF GREAT PICTURES”
and “THE STORY OF WASHINGTON”



1905

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“ Standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.”

—*James Russell Lowell.*

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The Story of Lincoln

NEARLY a century has passed since the men and maidens of a quiet village in Kentucky met to celebrate the wedding day of Thomas Lincoln and his young bride Nancy. The ever-changing line that marks the borders of the West rested then over the territory of Indiana, and a large part of Kentucky was hardly more than a wilderness. Hospitality was the law of the land. The stranger, pausing on his journey for the night, became a guest of honor. The customs of the time were simple; but there was no want of friendliness in the company that gathered around the rude table to wish the bride and bridegroom a long and prosperous life. The table was loaded with the delicacies of the period. Venison, bear-meat, wild turkey and ducks—all that the forest yielded was there in abundance, and what the occasion may have lacked in formality was made up in good cheer.

The wedding festivities over, the young couple began housekeeping in a small cabin near Elizabethtown. The next year a wee daughter came to make the new home more homelike. Soon after the family moved to a farm on the Big South Fork of Nolin Creek. There, on February twelfth in the year eighteen hundred nine, a little boy was born. They gave him the grand old name of Abraham, never dreaming how grandly he was to bear it.

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"There, on February twelfth in the year eighteen hundred nine,
a little boy was born"

boy busy at his play and to them he seemed like other children as, indeed, he was in all outward ways. His pleasures were those of the woods and the fields. Picking berries in the summer, gathering nuts in the autumn, each year venturing deeper into the forest that made so fascinating a playground, the lad grew wise in woodland lore. His sweet-faced mother taught him to see the beauty that lies in common things.

The hardships which pressed so heavily on the parents touched the younger ones but lightly. The Lincoln children found life pleasant enough and thought but seldom of the comforts that were missing. When they moved westward to southern Indiana, the seven days' journey seemed a marvelous adventure. School life was no less exciting, but of this they had only a taste. The boy especially was eager to learn. The age in which he lived was a busy one. Its daytime hours were filled for the most part with work suited to his strength. When the evening came, seated in the chimney corner, or stretched at full length before the glowing fire, he made friends with his books. These were few in number, but their quality was of the best. The Bible, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Esop's Fables, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe complete the modest list. The blaze that brightened the bare walls of the humble room fell with gentle warmth on the earnest face of the reader, bending over the precious volumes whose lines he knew by heart. He learned to write and "do

The strong free spirit of the West where he afterwards lived had much to do with the shaping of his character, but during the days of his babyhood our hero was a child of the South. The honor of being his birthplace belongs to the State of Kentucky. How great an honor it was the men and women of that far-away time little knew.

They saw a slender

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his sums" by the same friendly fireside, using its wooden shovel for a slate.

Gradually he became known as something of a scholar in the frontier town where scholarship was rare. His neighbors liked the tall, awkward youth who talked with them so pleasantly of the stories he had read. They were proud of his physical strength and openly boasted that he could outrun and out-wrestle all others in the place,—a claim their champion had no trouble in making good.

His thirst for knowledge grew with the years. To walk several miles in search of a grammar seemed to him a light task for so rich a reward. Every leisure moment saw him poring over the new-found treasure. One does not know whether he ever owned a geography. Perhaps he took his first lesson in that science when, journeying down the Mississippi to New Orleans, he saw a little corner of the great country that lay outside his Indiana home. This journey was an eventful one to Lincoln, then a young man of nineteen. The flat-boat, of which he was captain, was loaded with corn and other produce for the southern trade. He viewed with curious interest the streets of New Orleans. In its noisy market, jostled by sailors from all over the world, his ear caught the strange music of a foreign tongue. He felt himself a part of the city's throbbing life. What wonder that, when he turned again to the north, new fancies were stirring in his brain.

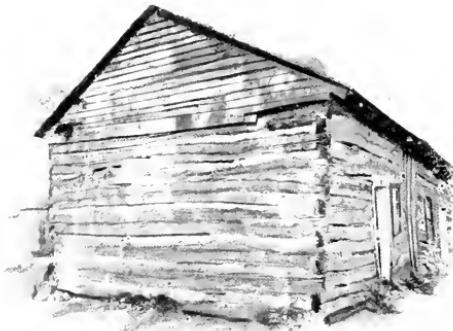
Not long after Lincoln's river voyage, his father's restless spirit led him to seek a home in Macon County, Illinois. Abraham, having reached the years of manhood, became a citizen of that state.

There was little to distinguish him from other men of his time. He was as poor as any. The forest echoed the sturdy blows of his axe as he swung it to pay for the clothing he wore. His garments were ill-fitting and carelessly worn. No grace of manner, either then or afterward, marked him as a hero. He had splendid strength of body, but a mind untrained, yet capable of



"In its noisy market."

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From "Story of Abraham Lincoln" by Eleanor Gridley.
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"His father's restless spirit led him to seek a home in
Macon County, Illinois."

great power. In addition, he possessed as a heritage from his mother, a certain high ambition to make the most of every opportunity that came in his way. This led him to keep on with his studies and to try all kinds of work. Life became rather more serious, especially, when, on a second visit to New Orleans, he came face to face with the institution of slavery, and saw men

and women sold like cattle in the open market. The spirit of freedom was in Lincoln's blood and the sight struck him with horror. Turning to a friend, we are told that he exclaimed, with quivering lips, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing (meaning slavery) I'll hit it hard." We shall see how truly, and with what anguish of heart, he kept that early vow.

On his return to New Salem, Lincoln, the river boatman, became Lincoln, the storekeeper. A more popular or obliging clerk could hardly have been found. His honesty was above reproach; his skill in the art of story-telling beyond question. Customers lingered to enjoy his homely wit until the village store became the social center of the place. Sometimes the evening talk drifted into politics, for the story-teller was always interested in public matters.

When the Sac and Fox Indians grew so hostile that soldiers were needed to defend the white settlements of the West, Lincoln gave up his clerkship to enter the list of volunteers. He was made captain of a company. The campaign lasted only three months. When the troops were dismissed he determined to have a store of his own. In this enterprise he was joined by another young man. The two bought a small stock of goods and began business for themselves. Perhaps indoor life was dull in contrast to days spent on horseback under the open sky; or it may be, the youthful merchant's thoughts

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strayed too often to his books; for at this time, Shakespeare and Burns were weaving their magic spell about him. At any rate, it seems that Lincoln's heart was scarcely in the work; and the partner proving incapable, one is not surprised to learn that the business was somewhat of a failure and finally "winked out," as Lincoln himself put it with quaint humor.

His need of money was now more urgent than ever, for he had contracted debts which must be paid. Being offered the position of deputy surveyor, he immediately accepted it, although he knew nothing of surveying. Six weeks hard study prepared him for the work. The work itself brought him in contact with many people, who admired his energy and liked his neighborly ways. They sent him to Springfield to represent them in the legislature.

There Lincoln met some of the brightest men of the day—a privilege he keenly appreciated. Many of them were destined to brilliant futures, but not one rose to so high a place in the hearts of men as the stiff, shy member from Sangamon who was so quick to recognize their greater learning, and gave such close attention to their speeches. With the same desire for improvement that marked his boyhood, Lincoln now resolved to study these men whose opportunities in life had been better than his own. He studied them to such good advantage, and made himself so useful to the people of his county, that they continued to re-elect him for a period of eight years, when his own affairs made it impossible for him to serve them longer.

During these years Lincoln was far from being idle. When the legislature was not in session, he was either engaged in surveying or in reading law. At the age of twenty-seven he was admitted to the bar.

The town of Springfield offered so many inducements to men of his profession, that Lincoln decided to make it his home.



"They sent him to Springfield to represent them in the legislature"

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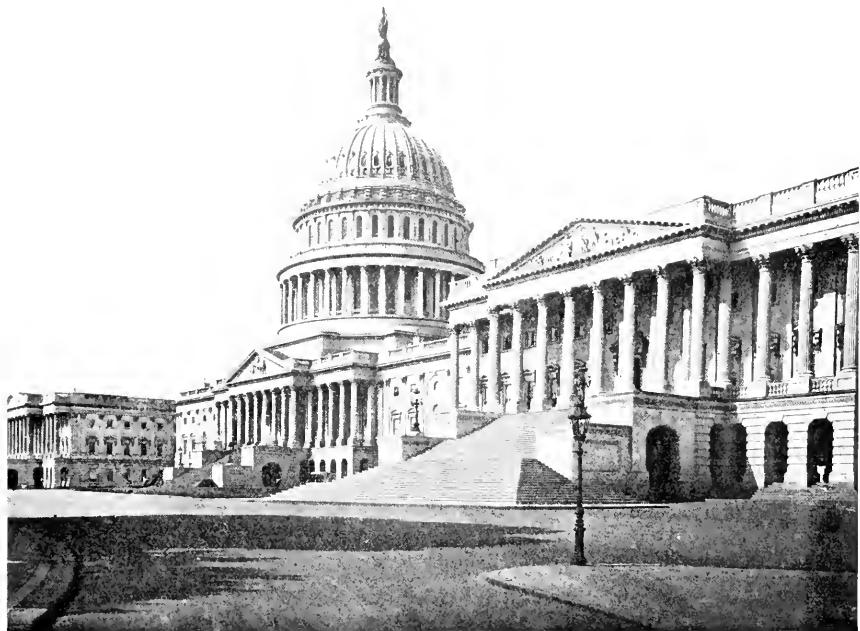
The change made with some reluctance proved a fortunate one. He was soon receiving a fair income from his law practice. The same qualities that had endeared him to the people of New Salem won him a place in Springfield. The social life of the town was delightful. Lincoln, though never gay, was always friendly. Here and there in many a quiet home he became a favorite guest. After his marriage Mrs. Lincoln's gracious hospitality and Lincoln's personal charm made their own fireside a place about which friends liked to gather. Amid the activities of private life he still found time for public duties.

When he entered Washington to take his seat as a member of the Thirtieth Congress, the town was very different from the beautiful city of today.



"The beautiful city of today."

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"The Capitol was without its present wings or its western terrace."

The Capitol was without its present wings or its western terrace. It lacked the massive dome above which the statue of Liberty, with sheathed sword and eagle's crest, now rises. The Patent Office and the Treasury are among the few old landmarks that remain unchanged. The house where Lincoln lived stood on ground now occupied by the Congressional Library.

Those months at the Nation's Capital were pleasant ones to Lincoln. His speeches on certain grave questions then before Congress attracted the attention of many to whom the speaker was as yet unknown. The people of the East began to ask what manner of man he was. They of the West

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"The house where Lincoln lived stood on ground now occupied by the Congressional Library."

already knew. "Honest Abe," they called him, and spoke the words in love. When the session was ended, and he returned to Illinois, they gave him the whole-souled welcome which is still so charming a characteristic of that western land.

To his townspeople Lincoln seemed a type of all that was best in citizenship. He was not merely willing but eager to aid in any enterprise to advance the city's interests. There are beautiful stories of his helpfulness to both old and young. The children of Springfield rejoiced in his friendship. They divined, with the sure instinct of childhood, that this grave-faced man was himself but a child at heart. His own boys found in him a royal playmate.

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... Honest Abe,' they called him, and spoke the words in love'"

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One would like to linger over the story of these days. The burden of debt which had weighed so heavily upon Lincoln had been lifted. The shadow of the struggle that was to darken all his later life had not yet fallen. For a little time we may think of him in the quiet enjoyment of his home.

Meanwhile his interest in national affairs steadily increased. As the years went by he grew more and more absorbed in political questions. His speeches during the Lincoln-Douglas debate are among the most remarkable in our history. They brought Lincoln unexpected fame. He became an acknowledged leader in the Republican party, which, two years later, nominated him for President. He was not a popular candidate, except in the West, where his fitness for leadership had long been known. The East preferred a man of its



"For a little time we may think of him in the quiet enjoyment of his home"

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own choosing, but conceding Mr. Lincoln's rare ability, gave him its warm support. The South was openly defiant. It desired the extension of slavery throughout the territories of the United States, a policy to which Lincoln was firmly opposed. He was opposed, also, to any violation of the Constitution, and held that no State could lawfully withdraw from the Union without the consent of the others.

The people of the South hated the principles for which Lincoln stood. In the blindness of their rage, they even thought they hated him—"the gentlest soul that ever ruled a State." While loyal hearts in every corner of the land were exulting over the news of his election, South Carolina withdrew from the Union. Before he was inaugurated six of the cotton-growing states had followed in her wake. The battle-cry of the Rebellion had been sounded.

Yet the tone of Mr. Lincoln's Inaugural Address was most friendly: "In your hands," he said, "my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government; while I shall have the most solemn one, to 'preserve, protect, and defend' it."

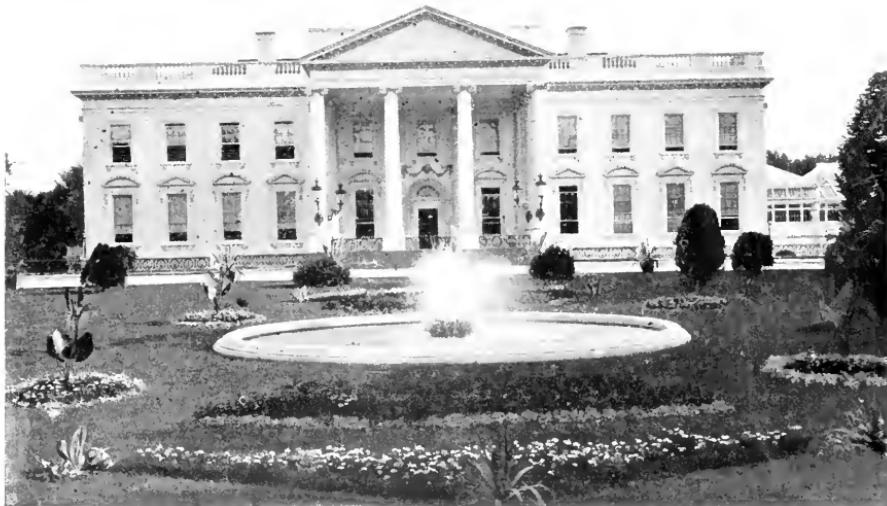
"I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection."

"The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Lincoln's oath of office to "protect and defend the Constitution" was no idle promise. To its faithful keeping he devoted every power that he possessed. Through all the years until his life's tragic end, his determination to preserve the Union never wavered. Neither was he deceived as to the nature of the struggle upon which he had entered. No other President, probably, ever crossed the threshold of the White House bowed down with such a weight of care. He knew that the secession of the Southern States was a blow at the Nation's heart. The Union itself was threatened. Nor were its foes all from without. In the very streets of the Capital treason had found a foothold. The North was hesitating and bewildered. Not until the rebels fired upon the old flag at Fort Sumter did it wake from its strange indifference. Then like one man it sprang to arms.

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The President's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers to aid in crushing the Rebellion was answered with enthusiasm. From every loyal state men hastened to the defense of the Capital. As he watched the long line of troops march past the White House grounds, the President's heart grew lighter. He felt that he no longer stood alone, yet from the southern windows of his home he saw the Confederate colors flying over Alexandria, and knew that for what they deemed the honor of that flag, men as brave as any living were gathering in the south.



"No other President, probably, ever crossed the threshold of the White House bowed down with such a weight of care"

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He was unable to share in the popular belief that the war would soon be over. His clearer vision told him that an anguished country would count its slain by thousands ere victory should come. His sense of responsibility was very great. The look of sadness, so marked in all his portraits, never wholly left his face. The lines about his firm mouth deepened. But the government, still reeling from the shock it had received, felt the pressure of his steady hand and gained confidence from the outward calmness of his manner.

As Commander-in-chief Lincoln was well-nigh worshipped by the rank and file of the army. He had generals who showed him small respect and proved unworthy of his faith. Statesmen were not wanting to question the soundness of his judgment. There were men in all stations of life who misunderstood his motives and even doubted their honesty. With truer insight into Lincoln's real nature the common soldiers trusted him like children. In return he gave them his heart. More and more often as the clouds of war grew darker, he would turn from a distinguished guest to hear the story of some suffering mother whose son was under sentence of death for neglect of duty. He always listened with respect to these humble visitors, and when it did not conflict with his sense of justice granted the pardon for which they came. His officers complained that so frequent a use of his pardoning power interfered with the discipline of the army. "The land is full of mourning," the President would reply, "I can sleep better tonight for knowing I have spared the life of some poor boy."

At the end of the year the country began to realize that instead of being over, as many had anticipated, the war had only just begun. The advantage lay with the South, though neither army had accomplished much. The troops on both sides were poorly drilled. This was especially true of the Union forces, the Confederates being more accustomed to horsemanship and the use of firearms. You remember how the untrained Northern soldiers fell back at the battle of Bull Run.

Soon after this event the President drove to all the military camps near Washington. It was his custom to visit these camps each day, "running over to see the boys" he called it, in his simple fashion. No guest was ever more welcome. His presence had an excellent effect on the spirits of the men, drooping under the humiliation of defeat. His manner plainly showed an unshaken faith in their courage. At the same time he busied himself in the work of reorganizing the army which, under the wholesome influence of daily drills, soon recovered from the panic of its first engagement.



"You remember how the untrained Northern soldiers fell back at the battle of Bull Run."

works," was quoted far and wide. During the next month the queer little Monitor won its brilliant victory in Hampton Roads. In April of the same year the Federal fleet under Commodore Farragut forced its way past the forts guarding the mouth of the Mississippi and took possession of New Orleans.

Meanwhile the Confederates gained ground in the East. The Union forces under McClellan lost heavily at Fair Oaks. "Stonewall" Jackson made his famous sally into the Shenandoah valley, driving the blue-coats like sheep before him. The Southern army under its gallant leader, General Robert E. Lee, camped on the soil of Maryland, and seemed to the disheartened North about to enter Washington itself.

Alert as any sentinel at the front, the President watched at home. Tirelessly as any soldier, though with different weapons, he fought within its capital the foes of the Republic. Their methods were not always those of honest warfare. Sometimes they came disguised as friends to urge upon the President a policy from which his upright soul recoiled. Often the men who fought at his side hindered, by impatient action, the very cause for whose success they prayed, Embittered by repeated failure and weary of waiting for victory long delayed, they even blamed the President for his great forbearance, mistaking it for weakness. "We are in doubt," they complained, "as to the purpose of the

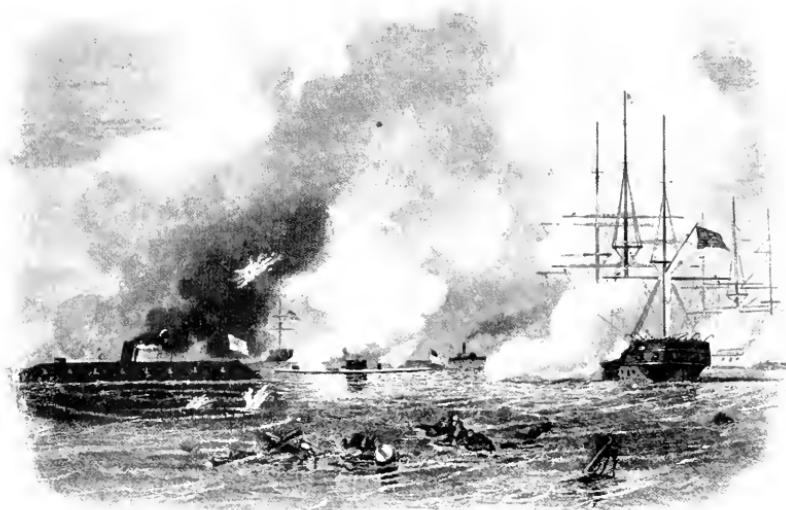
On the whole, the spring campaign of eighteen hundred sixty-two was favorable to the North. February brought the cheering news that Grant had captured Fort Donelson. His sturdy answer to the commander of the fort who had asked what terms could be made,—"No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your

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"A gallant leader"
General Robert E. Lee

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"The queer little Monitor won its brilliant victory
in Hampton Roads"

policy the President seems to be pursuing." Lincoln's reply was clear as crystal. "I would save the Union," he wrote, "I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be 'the Union as it was.' If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.

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I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views."

Some time before he wrote these lines the President had determined on the course that he would take. The first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation lay even then within his desk. He had written it after days and nights of anxious thought and without the knowledge of his Cabinet. It was a weapon against the slave states Lincoln did not wish to use. In his love for the whole country he felt that he was President of North and South alike. Earnestly



Stanton

Chase

Lincoln

Welles

Smith
Seward

Blair

Bates

"Calling his Cabinet together, Lincoln read to them the paper, the writing of which, had he done nothing else, would have made his name immortal"

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"And for thousands of human beings a New Year had dawned indeed"

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desiring to save the "Union as it was" he had waited patiently for many months. Now he regarded the proclamation as a "military measure necessary for the preservation of the Union." He meant to issue it whenever it should become clear that the time to do so had arrived. The success of the Union army at Antietam furnished the opportunity for which he had been looking. Calling his Cabinet together, Lincoln read to them the paper, the writing of which, had he done nothing else, would have made his name immortal. It provided that on the following New Year's day in all such states as had not by that time returned to their allegiance the slaves should be thenceforth and forever free.

Next morning's papers published the proclamation which afterwards took its place among the great documents of the world. Yet even as they read its splendid promise men doubted the courage of the writer. "He will never dare to sign it," they said, having yet to learn how like a rock for the thing he believed to be right, their President would stand. He signed the proclamation, in the executive chamber of the White House on the afternoon of January first, eighteen hundred sixty-three. And for thousands of human beings a New Year had dawned indeed.

The President did not expect to end the war immediately by giving the slaves their freedom. He hoped the measure would weaken the power of the Confederacy. That such would be the result was not at first apparent. For while the government's clearly defined policy toward slavery united the different factions in the North, in the South it fanned to fiercer heat the spirit of rebellion. The battle-fields of the next summer witnessed some of the most desperate fighting the world has ever seen. At Chancellorsville and Gettysburg the loss of life on both sides was appalling. On July fourth, after a long siege, the stronghold of Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant; and from that time it was evident to those who watched the conflict from afar that the Confederate cause was hopeless. Yet the South showed no sign of yielding, and for many months the awful strife went on. Again and again, before the struggle ended, the President's call for soldiers sounded in the North. Again and again the manhood of the North responded, and its homes gave up their treasure.

With a heavy heart the President saw the wasting of his country and heard its bitter cry. "I shall never be glad any more," he said. Yet sometimes the shadows lifted for an instant, and his laugh, which Mr. Lincoln's friends used to say was like no other laugh in all the world, rang out. Those who called



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"At Gettysburg the loss of life on both sides was appalling."

upon him in the early evening found him playing with his child, little "Tad," whose innocent gayety made the sunshine of those gloomy hours.

By the spring of sixty-four Washington had become one vast hospital, a city of white tents, past which the President drove each day in going from the Executive Mansion to his summer cottage at the Soldiers' Home. He often visited the wards, whose occupants watched eagerly for his coming. Looking into the strong, tender face, bending so graciously above him, many a Southern prisoner understood why the President's own soldiers served him with such beautiful devotion.

The capture of Atlanta on September second occurred at a fortunate time. The Presidential election was approaching. Mr. Lincoln was again the candidate of the Republican party. Sherman's victory at Atlanta, preceded by

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Farragut's success in Mobile Bay, and quickly followed by Sheridan's dashing ride through the Shenandoah valley, greatly strengthened the Administration. Though re-elected by a large majority, the President felt no personal triumph, only gratitude to the people for the confidence they had shown. "The election has demonstrated," he said, in addressing one of the political clubs of the District, "that a people's government can sustain a national election in the midst of a great civil war. Until now, it has not been known to the world that this was a possibility. It shows, also, how strong and sound we are. * * * It shows, also, that we have more men now than we had when the war began. Gold is good in its place; but living, brave, patriotic men are better than gold."



"The capture of Atlanta occurred at a fortunate time"

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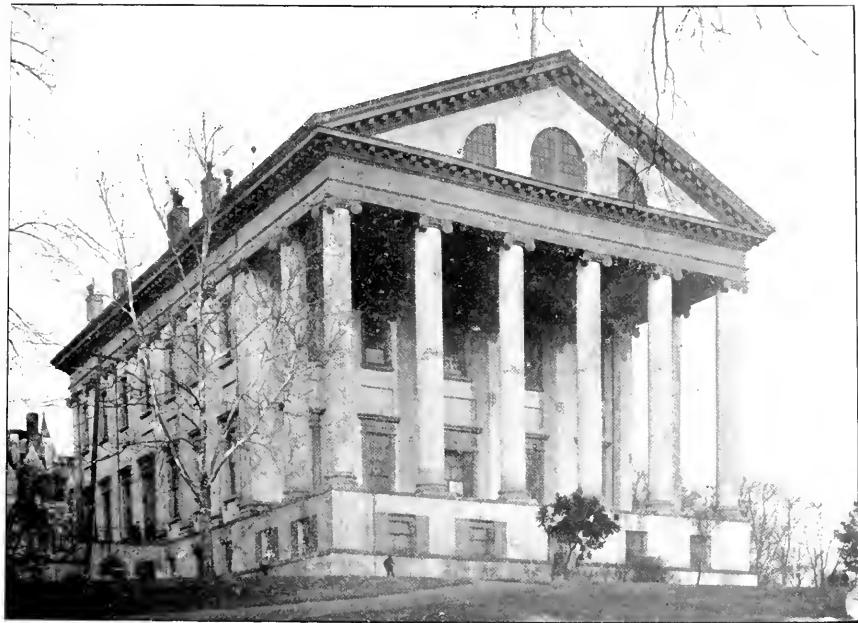
While the country was still discussing the results of the election, Sherman began his long march to the sea. His capture of Savannah was a severe blow to the already weakened Confederacy. When Mr. Lincoln delivered his second Inaugural Address, the end of the Rebellion was at hand. Hating war, he had led the people through four long years of dreadful warfare. How his great heart must have rejoiced as he spoke to them now of the things that make for peace:-

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans,—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."



"Sherman began his long march to the sea"

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"The Union troops entered Richmond and raised the American flag over the Confederate Capitol."

Early in April the Union troops entered Richmond and raised the American flag over the Confederate Capitol. A little later the remnant of Lee's fine army surrendered to General Grant, who, catching the spirit of Mr. Lincoln's Inaugural Address, permitted the Southern soldiers to retain their horses, saying they would need them for the spring plowing.

On the morning of April fourteenth, tidings that the war was over flashed through the North. In its soft beauty the day itself gave promise of the summer yet to come. Each heart shared the season's gladness. Every one felt, as James Russell Lowell wrote his friend, that the news was indeed from Heaven. But in the midst of its rejoicing, a sudden silence fell upon the land.

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Late in the evening Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln entered a private box at Ford's Theater. The people rose to greet them, and the smiling President bowed in



"Late in the evening Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln entered a private box at Ford's Theater"



"The dying President was taken at once from the theater
to a house near by"

from the theater to a house near by. Outside its doors the people waited for the dawn to dispel the shadows of the night. To him who lay so quietly within its darkened chamber, the morning had already come. A few hours later the body of the dead President was carried through the hushed streets of the city to the private apartments of the White House.

The nation's joy had turned to deepest sorrow. With passionate grief the country mourned its fallen leader. At the hour appointed for his funeral, and while he lay in state within the rotunda of the Capitol, services were held in many churches throughout the land. The love of the people could not be

answer to their cheers. No one dreamed of any danger. All eyes were centered on the stage, when the laughing audience, startled by the report of a pistol, heard a woman's voice cry out, "The President is shot." The Stars and Stripes he loved so well were draped beneath the President's box. The man who had so dishonored his country's flag caught his spur within its folds and fell heavily to the floor. Though badly injured, he quickly recovered himself and, aided by the terrible confusion, made his escape.

The dying President was taken at once

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"The old historic building within whose walls the Union he had saved had had its stormy birth"

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denied, and so the train that bore him to his distant home often waited that citizens of the towns along the way might look once more upon his peaceful face. In the "City of Brotherly Love" the President was carried to the old historic building within whose walls the Union he had saved had had its stormy birth. His homeward journey followed the same route over which he had come to Washington a few short years before. Under arches bright with flags, over bridges hung with green, through stations decked with flowers, the sad procession passed. Beside his western grave the nation gave him to his own. The glory of the sunset was fading from the sky as, with tender hands, his neighbors laid the President at rest.



Lincoln's Address at Gettysburg

November 19, 1863

“ Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

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